

*Lori Borysewicz*

*Secretary, CT Family Resource Center Alliance*

Good evening Senator Osten, Senator Formica, Representative Walker and members of the Appropriations Committee. My name is Lori Borysewicz and I am the Secretary of the CT Family Resource Center Alliance and Director of the Plymouth Family Resource Centers. Thank you for allowing me to speak tonight.

The CT Family Resource Alliance represents 74 sites throughout Connecticut. Dr. Edward Zigler, Director of the Bush Center for Child Development and Social Policy at Yale developed the concept of Family Resource Centers based on the School of the 21st Century. He envisioned a comprehensive, integrated, community-based system of family support and child development services that are located in or linked to public school buildings. This offers families a single point of entry to programs and services and connections schools, families and communities together regardless of race, ethnicity or socio-economic status. We have succeeded in his dream and have grown in numbers and recognition throughout the years. In addition, Family Resources Centers assist communities in their “Child Find” efforts by providing early detection and intervention through developmental screenings, early learning environments, parent education/leadership, community engagement, resource and referrals.

Currently we are working with the National Family Support Network that is comprised of more than 2,000 Family Support and Strengthening organizations nationwide. As the United States’ coordinating body for Family Strengthening & Supports, we were honored to be asked to join the network that accepts only one Family Support program per state.

Prevention, as we all know, is key to the success of a child. FRCs have been experts at prevention and intervention since 1988. Our mission is

to prevent an array of childhood and adolescent problems by strengthening effective family management practices and establishing a continuum of childcare and support services for the optimal development of the child beginning at birth.

We do not duplicate services – we do, however, put it all together and connect the dots. We are culturally sensitive and intergenerational in our approach. Moreover, the best part is we customize what we do according to the need of the individual school in an individual town. In addition, the even better part is that we have the ability to leverage dollars to support schools so that they can better meet the instructional needs of the students.

FRCs have accumulated so much knowledge of community and school services over the years that they not only link families with needed services but also assist school staff and various community-based agencies that depend on the FRCs' knowledge base and access to families.

While we are experts at leveraging funds, we are still operating below our usual funding level, which forces us to serve fewer families and help less children. Please do not consolidate our funding into the Student Support Service Block Grant, maintain funding at the current level and keep the FRC line item within the SDE Budget.

Children will always need support; families will always need help.

Thank you for protecting that support and offering that help.